

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

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TAGS: PINT, BE

SUBJECT: CHANGES IN CULTURAL COUNCIL AND AT PSC

REF: BRUSSELS 010239

BEGIN UNKLAS

SUMMARY: FDF AND RW SUPPORT IN THE ELECTION OF EMILE JEUNEHOMME (PLP)
TO THE PRESIDENCY OF THE TROUBLESOME FRENCH CULTURAL COUNCIL SUGGESTS
A RELUCTANCE ON THE PART OF THOSE PARTIES TO PLAY TOO NEGATIVE A ROLE
ON THE EVE OF THE COMMUNITY NEGOTIATIONS. SOCIAL CHRISTIAN PARTY (PSC)

ELECTS COLORLESS WALLOON POLITICIAN SENATOR GEORGE GRAMME, TO SUCCEED
NOTHOMB, WHO RESIGNED THIS WEEK. END SUMMARY.

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1. THE FRENCH CULTURAL COUNCIL ON OCTOBER 19 ELECTED PLP DEPUTY (LIEGE)

EMILE - EDGARD JEUNEHOMME AS COUNCIL PRESIDENT, REPLACING FDF DEPUTY LUCIEN OUTERS. OF THE 150 COUNCIL MEMBERS PRESENT (OUT OF A TOTAL OF 172) 84 VOTED FOR JEUNEHOMME, 61 FOR THE ONLY OTHER CANDIDATE, PEIRRE FELIZE (PSB). FIVE BLANK BALLOTS WERE CAST. OTHERS, NOW MAYOR OF AUDERGHEM, DID NOT STAND FOR RE-ELECTION, HONORING AN ALLEGED 1975 COMMITMENT NOT TO RUN AGAINST A SOCIALIST CANDIDATE. (IT WAS A RESULT OF A PSB-FDF-RW CHALLENGE TO GOVERNMENT THAT OUTERS WAS ELECTED ON 1975. OUTERS REPLACED JEUNEHOMME, WHO SERVED AS COUNCIL PRESIDENT FROM 1973 TO 1975.) THE COUNCIL IS COMPOSED AS FOLLOWS: 41 PSC; 24 RW; 20PLP; 61 PSB: 15 FDF; 6 PL (BRUSSELS LIBERALS); 3 PCB; 1 UDP; AND ON INDEPENDENT LIBERIAL.

2. ON OCTOBER 19 CHARLES FERDINAND NOTHOMB HANDED OVER THE PRESIDENCY OF THE PSC TO GEORGES GRAMME, SENATOR AND MAJOR-DESIGNATE OF HERVE (RETEL). BORN AT BATTICE (EAST OF LIEGE), GRAMME OPERATED A SUCCESSFUL FAMILY PRINTING BUSINESS BEFORE BECOMING A MEMBER OF THE BATTICE COMMUNAL COUNCIL. SUCCESSIVELY ALDERMAN AND MAYOR OF BATTICE, IN 1971 GRAMME WAS ELECTED SENATOR FOR VERVIERS. ADVANCING TO PSC LEADERSHIP IN 1974, HE BECAME HEIR-APPARENT TO NOTHOMB, FOR WHOM HE SUBSTITUTED DURING THE LATTER'S FOUR-MONTH STAY IN THE U.S. IN 1974. IN PRESS CONFERENCE AFTER HIS ACCESSION TO THE PRESIDENCY, GRAMME, CONSISTENT WITH HIS RECORD AS AN UNSPECTACULAR MIDDLE-OF-THE-ROADER- SAID HE IDENTIFIED WITH NEITHER THE LABOR NOR THE CONSERVATIVE WING OF HIS PARTY, RATHER WITH ITS CENTER. HE SAID THAT HE WOULD DO HIS BEST THAT THE PRESENT GOVERNMENT STANDS THROUGH THE TERM OF THE PRESENT LEGISLATURE (1978).
END UNKLAS

3. COMMENT: THE RE-ELECTION OF JEUNEHOMME TO SLPRESIDENCY OF THE FRANCOPHONE CULTURAL COUNCIL- A REVERSAL OF HIS UNEXPECTED OUSTER LAST YEAR BY THE ANTI-GOVERNMENT CANDIDATE, OUTERS- REPRESENTS A SUBTLE TACTICAL MOVE IN THE COMPLEX GAME OF BELGIAN COMMUNITY POLITICS. IN 1975 THE SOCIALISTS, FDF, BRUSSELS, LIBERALS AND THE TINDEMANS COALITION MEMBER, RW, COMBINED TO ELECT OUTERS AND THEREBY DEMONSTRATE PUBLICLY THAT THE TINDEMANS GOVERNMENT DID NOT COMMAND A MAJORITY IN FRENCH-SPEAKING BELGIUM. THE FRANCOPHONE "PATRIOTS" UNDERLINED THE FACT BY
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BLOCKING RELEASE OF APPROPRIATIONS FOR CULTURAL AFFAIRS IN THE FRANCOPHONE REGION UNTIL THE GOVERNMENT IN EFFECT SAID, "PLEASE." THIS YEAR THE FDF, COMING OFF A SATISFYING WIN IN THE OCTOBER 10 COMMUNAL ELECTIONS, APPEARS TO BE SENDING ANOTHER MESSAGE TO TINDEMANS WITH ITS PRO-GOVERNMENT (JEUNEHOMME) VOTE IN THE CULTURAL COUNCIL, VIZ. FDF WISHES TO ABANDON ITS SPOILER ROLE AND, INSTEAD WORK CONSTRUCTIVELY IN THE FORTHCOMING INTER-PARTY "DIALOGUE" ON CONSTITUTIONAL REFORM WITH ANYONE (LIKE JEUNEHOMME)

WHO FAVORS TURNING BELGIUM INTO A DECENTRALIZED FEDERAL STATE.
FIRESTONE

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